Sun-Democrat
PADUCAH, KY.
Circulation: 30,248
(Sunday: 30,248)

AUG 3 0 1979

Novelist trying to sell photos of JFK autopsy

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N.Y. Times News Service

NEW YORK — Harrison Livingstone, a novelist and freelance journalist, is trying to sell photographs he describes as copies of the autopsy pictures of President Kennedy. He says that he is selling them because he and his group need at least $300,000 "to prove the conspiracy in the murder of our president."

The photos are purported to be copies of those turned over to the National Archives by the Kennedy family in 1966 with the express stipulation that they never be shown to the public.

In 1977, copies of the prints, but no negatives, were lent to the House Select Committee on Assassinations. The committee's chief counsel, G. Robert Blakey, kept them in a safe and then returned them to the Archives in January 1979 by armored truck.

Livingstone, who has been writing a series of assassination articles in The Baltimore Chronicle, a community monthly, says he has offered the photographs, in both black and white and color, to UPI, NBC, CBS, ABC, The New York Times, The New York Post, The Boston Globe, The Philadelphia Inquirer, The Washington Star, The Washington Post, The London Telegraph, The London Express, The Los Angeles Times, Playboy, Hustler, Springer News Service (Germany), and the Asahi Shimbun in Tokyo. He said that he had received no orders as of late Tuesday.

ABC and NBC told Blakey of the offer on Monday. Blakey, who has been teaching law at Cornell since the work of the committee ended, reported the matter to the Department of Justice, and he said Tuesday that he expected the government to take immediate action.

"There are two things possible here," Blakey said. "Either it's a fraud against the people who would purchase these pictures. Or it's an attempt to sell stolen property. I did everything in my power to make sure these pictures were not disclosed in a manner that was not consistent with good taste. And only a person of consummate bad taste would publicly disseminate these materials."

Reached at the office of his attorney in Baltimore, Livingstone said there was no fraud. "I have five different pictures," he said. "They're legitimate. And they aren't stolen." Asked how he had acquired them, he said, "No one will ever find out."

Livingstone says that the autopsy pictures of President Kennedy have been altered and that this proves that "the government was part of the assassination conspiracy."

Because he says he and a consortium of other assassination critics "want to go into this conspiracy in depth," Livingstone says he and his group need money. "I intend to publish these pictures. And I'm not going to give 'em away," he said.

Blakey said that not more than 10 persons had had access to the photos while they were in the committee's hands, "and none of those people would have copied them."

He did concede, however, that at least one unauthorized person had handled the pictures.

In the summer of 1978, Regis T. Blahut, an officer from the Central Intelligence Agency assigned to the committee, was dismissed from the agency when it was discovered that he had entered the locked safe containing the photos and other sensitive evidence without authorization. Blahut said recently, however, that there was an innocent explanation, although he did not elaborate.

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